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OVERVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IN SINO-U.S. RELATIONS

- o China views itself as the conservator of communist doctrine.
- o Historical fear of "chaos" is a driving force behind Communist Party efforts to maintain power.
 - The events of Tiananmen Square in June 1989 are seen as the type of chaos that can occur when political control weakens.
 - Events in Eastern Europe and the CIS are also seen as China's future if the Communist Party does not maintain control.
- o Talk of a "new world order" is viewed as a U.S.-led conspiracy to undermine the Communist Party's legitimacy.
 - In contrast to official hostility and misgivings about U.S. intentions, the Chinese people remain overwhelmingly pro-American.
- o Fear of "peaceful evolution" (defined as a U.S.-inspired plot to bring about the fall of communism through peaceful means) is a driving force behind China's attempts to tightly control the domestic situation and relations with the outside world.
 - Despite views of China as a monolithic dictatorship, these attempts at control meet with irregular results. Economic reform has brought a decentralization of authority.
- o U.S. concern over human rights and China's reaction to what is perceived as meddling in its internal affairs continues to be a major point of friction.
 - Market forces have an irresistible impact on society and political discourse.
 - Factories, service enterprises, universities and research institutes all use computers, fax machines, cellular telephones and communications networks. People using these devices learn that technology is not politically neutral.
 - Thousands of Chinese still travel abroad, bringing new ideas with them when they return.
- o U.S. elections later this year, at almost the same time as the fourteenth national Communist Party conference, will provide a stark juxtaposition of our two systems.